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MERIDIAN CROSSING PLANNED DEVELOPMENT
R1U TO PDRS

STAFF REPORT
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REQUEST MADE, PROPOSED USE, LOCATION:

Owner/Petitioner Gary W. Schroeder, represented by attorney Joseph Bumbleburg, is requesting PDRS zoning for 0.31 acres in the City of West Lafayette for a three-story apartment building containing 14 units with 28 bedrooms and a 28-space ground floor parking garage. The property is located in the New Chauncey Neighborhood at 818 Northwestern Avenue, Wabash 18(NW) 23-4.

ZONING HISTORY AND AREA ZONING PATTERNS:

The subject property's entire block is zoned R1U as are most of the blocks east of the site. R1 zoning is found to the north across Meridian Street in the Hills and Dales neighborhood, CBW zoning is found on the block to the south and Purdue University is directly west across Northwestern Avenue. Rezoning activity in the immediate vicinity has been limited to planned development projects further to the south on Northwestern Avenue which include: Z-1278 - Purdue Exponent Planned Development (approved 1987), Z-2460 - 516 Northwestern Avenue Planned Development (approved 2011) and Z-2472 - The Landmark Planned Development (withdrawn February, 2012).

AREA LAND USE PATTERNS:

The property presently contains a vacant lot and a single-family rental home. To the south is the Stewart Cooperative and to the east and north are single-family homes. To the west is the Purdue University campus, Mackey Arena and Ross-Ade Stadium.

TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION:

Northwestern Avenue is classified as a primary arterial and Meridian Street is classified as a secondary arterial according to the adopted *Thoroughfare Plan*. Right-of-way is being dedicated along the Northwestern frontage in order to accommodate a proposed 12-foot sidewalk. A 6-foot sidewalk is proposed along the project's Meridian Street frontage. Parking for the project is accessed off of Meridian and the alley bisecting the block. The project is parked at 1 space per bedroom and plentiful bicycle parking is being provided both inside the garage and adjacent to the main entrance of the building.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND UTILITY CONSIDERATIONS:

City utilities and Indiana American water are available to serve the site.

PUBLIC ART:

The Meridian Crossing Planned Development is located on a prominent and highly visible corner in the city. Being such an important gateway entrance into the New Chauncey and Hills and Dales neighborhoods as well as Purdue University, staff has successfully negotiated with the developer to provide a public art easement on a portion of the landscaping area of the project's Northwestern Avenue frontage. The City of West Lafayette's Public Art Advisory Group will be the owners of the art installed and shall also be responsible for its maintenance. Subject to the approval of the Administrative Officer, the exact dimensions of the public art easement will be finalized and recorded after the Public Art Advisory Group brings an acceptable proposal to the property owner.

STAFF COMMENTS:

The Meridian Crossing Planned Development is located at an important transition point in the City of West Lafayette. The Meridian Street and Northwestern Avenue intersection is an entry point to two historic neighborhoods and Purdue University. South of this intersection begins the more intensely urbanized and pedestrian-oriented section of the Northwestern Avenue corridor while to the north lies the more suburban and less dense section of the corridor. This boundary represents the northernmost limit of urban densities along the Northwestern Avenue corridor. The challenge for any redevelopment effort on this corner is one of providing an appropriate transition from the more intense uses to the west and south to the less intense, purely residential uses to the north and east. This project accomplishes this task through its proposed use, scale and design.

By proposing a residential project instead of a mixed-use or commercial project (which along Northwestern Avenue, across the street from Purdue, is not unreasonable to imagine), the developer has immediately lessened the impact of the project on its surroundings in terms of the number of vehicular trips to and from the site. Given the project's proximity to Purdue it is also not unreasonable to expect that many of these trips will be made by pedestrians and bicyclists. With the parking ratio set at 1 space per bedroom, the parking self-sufficiency of the project is more than secured.

The scale of the project, a modest 3-story structure of 14 dwelling units, immediately sets the tone for what type of development is appropriate on this transitional block. Relative to building height, as a matter of right the R1 and R1U zoning districts allow building heights up to 35-feet. Meridian Crossing tops out at just 9-feet over that limit at approximately 44-feet. This difference in heights is not dramatic and further demonstrates the project's role in architecturally bridging the more urban environment to the south and west with the more suburban environment to the north and east. Also regarding scale, by taking nearly one quarter of the block, the project develops land at an appropriate scale that might otherwise be assembled for a much larger, mixed-use or commercial project, thereby establishing this block as the true edge of the urbanized section of the Northwestern Avenue corridor as it transitions into the suburban section to the north.

The project's design is sensitive to and incorporates its surroundings. The pitched-roof design, as opposed to the more urban look of a flat-roof, blends more appropriately with the homes to the north and east while the corner entrance lobby, with its decorated exterior north-facing wall, provides an appropriate focal point for the entire project, firmly establishing the pedestrian-oriented environment proper for this gateway into the urban section of the Northwestern Avenue corridor.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approval, contingent on meeting all requirements of UZO 2-28-10 for submission of Final Detailed Plans, signed off by those noted in that section to include:

1. All sheets (other than preliminary plat) that make up the approved Preliminary Plan;
2. PD construction plans per UZO Appendix B2-2;
3. A final plat per UZO Appendix B-3-2 as applicable;
4. Appropriate surety submitted with final detailed plans;
5. Plant schedule approved by the West Lafayette Greenspace Administrator;
6. A public art easement agreement shall be submitted with the Final Detailed Plans specifying that the owner shall grant an easement for the installation and maintenance of public art to the City of West Lafayette's Public Art Advisory Group (or their successors) upon the landscape areas of the development's Northwestern Avenue frontage. Subject to the approval of the Administrative Officer, the final terms and exact dimensions of the public art easement will be finalized upon the City of West Lafayette's Public Art Advisory Group bringing an acceptable proposal to the property owner. Upon acceptance and recordation, the Final Plat for Meridian Crossing Planned Development shall be amended to include the exact dimensions of the public art easement area. Any change to the approved landscape plan in order to accommodate public art shall be bound by the provisions of UZO 2-28-12(a) concerning minor modifications.
7. With Administrative Officer approval, decorative fencing may be added to Meridian Crossing's Northwestern Avenue frontage in order to better protect the landscaping and public art to be installed there.